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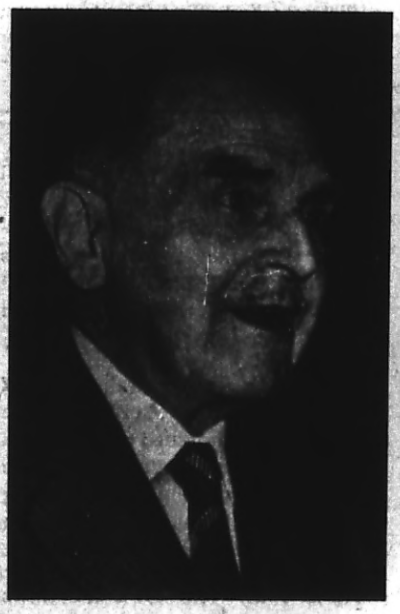
"WE WON'T WORK ON A-BOMBS" – Scientists

All West Germany's leading atomic scientists have formally declared that they will refuse to work on atomic weapons, and will confine all their efforts to developing the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

The eighteen scientists, including four Nobel Prize winners, stated in their joint declaration, issued on April 12th, that they were strongly opposed to the arming of the West German Wehrmacht with atomic weapons.

The scientists' declaration was warmly greeted by most sections of the public and many newspapers in West Germany, but was immediately rejected by West German Chancellor Adenauer, who declared that the scientists were not in possession of the political and military information necessary for judging the situation.

In East Germany, atomic scientists gave a warm welcome to the action of their West German colleagues, and stated that they themselves were working solely on the peaceful use of the atom. East German official circles pointed out that that the Government of the German Democratic Republic had repeatedly appealed for East-West agreement renouncing atomic weapons and their manufacture, and a ban on the stationing of all atomic weapons on German soil.



Professor Otto Hahn, West German atom scientist and Nobel Prize winner, who first split the atom together with Dr. Liese Meitner in 1938, one of the initiators of the West German scientists' appeal

Professor Gustav Hertz, East German atom scientist and Nobel Prize winner, who has appealed for an ending of all atomic war preparations on German territory, and concentration on peaceful use of the atom

Here is a summary of recent developments in the atom weapon controversy in West Germany:

1956

November 19th: Leading West German atom scientists wrote to Defence Minister Strauss expressing their uneasiness at reports that the West German Wehrmacht might be armed with atomic weapons. They warned that they would make a public protest if such a step was taken.

1957

January: The atom scientists were invited to Bonn for a conference with Defence Minister Strauss. He assured them that no steps would be taken which would give them any grounds for anxiety.

April 5th: Chancellor Adenauer confirmed at a press conference that it was planned to arm the West German Wehrmacht with atom weapons, and stated "Tactical atomic weapons are nothing more than a further development of artillery". He hinted that at some future date the Wehrmacht might arm itself with H-bombs.

April 12th: The eighteen atom scientists decided they could no

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longer remain silent, and published their sensational appeal, published in full on page 63. Chancellor Adenauer immediately replied very brusquely that "these gentlemen" were not in possession of the information on foreign affairs and military affairs which were necessary before judging the situation. "I regret the fact that they did not talk to me before issuing their statement" he added.

April 13th: Defence Minister Strauss accused the atom scientists of "irresponsibility" in issuing their statement without previous consultations with the West German Government. He said that they were "playing into the hands of the Soviets". Chancellor Adenauer, in a further statement, said that the proposal that West Germany should renounce atomic weapons "had nothing to do with scientific facts, but is purely a political question". Adenauer stated that renunciation of atomic weapons by West Germany would mean the end of NATO.

April 14th: Seven East German atomic scientists expressed their support for the action taken by their West German colleagues, and stated "In the German Democratic Republic we are not faced with such problems, since we are exclusively concerned with the peaceful application of atomic energy."

Social Democratic leader Erich Ollenhauer, commenting on Chancellor Adenauer's reaction, stated: "Such a presumptuous and arrogant man cannot be allowed to remain in a leading position. His lack of respect for independent opinion has revealed his authoritarian and totalitarian attitude as never before."

Eight leading Protestant churchmen in West Germany, including Pastor Martin Niemoeller and former Minister of the Interior Dr. Gustav Heinemann, sent a telegram to the eighteen atom scientists thanking them for the service which they had done to the German people and to humanity. "We are deeply moved by the fact that German scientists have placed their conscience above all else" the telegram stated.

April 16th: Hamburg Provincial Parliament passed a resolution greeting the protest and calling on the Federal Government to see to it that German atomic science should concern itself solely with the peaceful use of atomic energy.

April 17th: Chancellor Adenauer summoned the leading atom scientists to a six-hour conference in Bonn, at which he attempted to make them withdraw their protest. The atom scientists attending the conference were Professors Hahn, Gerlach and Weizsaecker: they were confronted by Adenauer, War Minister Strauss, and Hitler Generals Speidel and Heusinger. The conference ended with a vaguely worded communique calling in general terms for disarmament efforts. The communique ended with these words: "The atomic scientists who took part in the talks wish to express the fact that it was not their main aim to exclude only the Federal Republic from the general fateful development, but that they wanted to take the initiative in preventing the fate which threatens the whole world. They believed that they had to begin their efforts in the state of which they were citizens."

April 18th: The central board of the powerful West German Trade Union movement issued a declaration opposing the stationing of atomic weapons in Germany, and opposing any training in the West German army in the use of atomic weapons.

April 19th: The London "News Chronicle" reported that modern guided missiles were already being manufactured in West Germany in the Ludwig Boelkow Works near Stuttgart.

The Men Who Signed

Four Nobel Prize Winners

Here are some short notes on the West German atom scientists who signed the appeal:

Professor Fritz Bopp, 47, head of the Institute for Theoretical Physics, Munich. Special field: elementary particles, quantum theory.

Professor Max Born, 74, retired. Nobel Prize winner. Emigrated in 1933. Special field: atomic theory, quantum theory, crystals.

Professor Rudolf Fleischmann, 53, Director of the Physical State Institute, Hamburg. Special field: atom physics, physical optics.

Professor Walter Gerlach, 67, head of the Physical Institute, Munich. Special field: experimental physics.

Professor Otto Hahn, 78, Nobel Prize winner, President of the Max Planck Society, Goettingen. Discoverer of uranium fission. Special field: radium, atomic fission.

Professor Otto Haxel, 48, Director of the 2nd Physical Institute, Heidelberg.

Professor Werner Heisenberg, 55, Nobel Prize winner, Director of the Max Planck Physical Institute in Goettingen. Special field: atomic theory, fusion theory.

Professor Hans Kopfermann, 61, Director of the 1st Physical Institute in Heidelberg. Special fields: spectroscopy, electrons.

Professor Max von Laue, 77, Nobel Prize winner, Director of the Fritz Heber Institute Berlin. Special field: x-rays, relativity.

Professor Heinz Maier-Leibnitz, 46, Laboratory for Technical Physics, Technical High School, Munich. In charge of building West Germany's first atom reactor. Special field: atomic physics.

Professor Josef Mattauch, 61, Director of the Max Planck Chemical Institute, Mainz. Special field: mass spectrography, atomic physics.

Professor Friedrich-Adolf Paneth, 69, Director of the Max Planck Chemical Institute, Mainz. Special field: chemistry, radio-activity.

Professor Wolfgang Paul, 43, professor of experimental physics, Bonn University. Special field: atom physics, ray physics.

Professor Wolfgang Riezler, 51, professor of atomic physics, Bonn University. In charge of building cyclotron at Bonn.

Professor Fritz Strassmann, 55, Director of the Institute for Inorganic Chemistry, Mainz. Cooperated with Professor Hahn on uranium fission experiments. Special field: technical chemistry, atomic chemistry.

Professor Wilhelm Walcher, 46, Director of the Physical Institute, Marburg. Special field: atom physics.

Professor Carl Friedrich von Weizsaecker, 44, department head of the Max Planck Institute for Physics, Goettingen. Special field: atom core physics, astrophysics.

Professor Karl Wirtz, 46, department head of the Max Planck Institute for Physics, Goettingen. Special field: physical chemistry.

ATOM APPEAL

Full Text of West German Statement

Here is the full text of the West German atom scientists' statement, issued on April 12th:

The atomic research scientists who have signed this statement are deeply concerned at the plans for atomic arming of the (West German) Federal Army. A number of us expressed our objections to the relevant minister several months ago. Today the debate on this subject has become general. The signatories to this statement therefore feel obliged to draw attention to a number of facts of which all experts are aware, but which appear to be too little known to the general public.

1. **Tactical atomic weapons have the destructive effect of normal atomic weapons.** They are described as 'tactical' in order to express the fact that they are not intended to be used against human habitations, but against troops in land fighting. Every single tactical atom bomb or atom shell has an effect similar to the first atom bomb which destroyed Hiroshima. Since today a large number of tactical atom weapons are available their destructive effect would be much greater. These bombs are described as 'small' only in comparison with the static 'bombs' which have been developed in the meantime, particularly the H-bomb.

2. **No natural bounds are known to the possibility of development for the exterminatory effect of the static atomic weapons.** Today a tactical atom bomb can destroy a small town, but an H-bomb can make temporarily uninhabitable an area of territory of the size of the Ruhr. It would probably be possible today to wipe out the population of the Federal Republic by H-bombs through the spreading of radio-activity. We know of no technical possibility of guaranteeing the protection of large parts of the population from this danger.

We know how difficult it is to draw the political consequences from these facts. As non-politicians our right to do so will be disputed. However, our activities in the field of pure science and its application, activities in which we draw many young people into our field, places upon us a responsibility for the possible consequences of this activity. That is why we can not remain silent on all political questions.

We espouse the cause of liberty as it is represented today by the western world in opposition to Communism. We do not deny the fact that the mutual fear of the H-bomb plays a considerable role in the maintenance of peace in the whole world, and in the preservation of liberty in one part of the world. We regard this method of maintaining peace and liberty as unreliable in the long run, however, and we believe that mortal danger will be incurred in case of a breakdown.

We do not feel ourselves competent to make concrete proposals for the policy of the great powers. For a small country like the German Federal Republic we believe that it can defend itself best, and contribute to world peace best, by formally and voluntarily rejecting the possession of atomic weapons of all sorts. None of the signatories to this statement would be ready to participate in any way in the manufacture, testing or use of atomic weapons. At the same time we emphasis that it is of the utmost importance to devote all energies to the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and we wish to cooperate in this task as hitherto.

Professor Fritz Bopp
Professor Max Born
Professor Rudolf Fleischmann
Professor Walther Gerlach
Professor Otto Hahn
Professor Otto Haxel
Professor Werner Heisenberg
Professor Hans Kopfermann
Professor Max von Laue
Professor Heinz Mayer-Leibnitz
Professor Josef Mattauch
Professor Friedrich-Adolf Paneth
Professor Wolfgang Paul
Professor Wolfgang Riezler
Professor Fritz Strassmann
Professor Wilhelm Walcher
Professor Carl Friedrich von Weizsaecker
Professor Karl Wirtz

ATOM ELECTRICITY SOON

What Peaceful Fission Brings

By Professor Heinz Barwich,

Chief of Democratic Germany's Atomic Physics Institute

As a scientist engaged in the construction of the modern research centre for atomic physics in Dresden I should like to say something about the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

We should remember that it is not due to a lack of ability or energy on the part of German scientists and engineers that Germany lagged so far behind other countries in the development of atomic science. The reason for the time lag was the war policy of the Third Reich, which brought to such an abrupt end the promising development which we had made, and which led after the ending of the war to a temporary ban on work on atomic science in Germany.

Now, with the construction of the first research reactor at Rossendorf near Dresden, which was made possible by the aid offered by the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic has taken an important step forward in scientific and technical development. The aim of this development is to make available to our economy, as soon as possible, the full use of this new source of energy. This beginning has been taken just in time, since the character of today's technical developments, marked by the automation of production in various branches, demands most urgently new sources of energy for making electric power. Conservative estimates have shown that by 1965 it will be necessary to provide about two percent of the total electrical power by atomic means, since there is a limit to the increase in coal production. We must also consider the fact that the coal reserves in our Republic are not unlimited, and that it is very desirable to use these reserves as far as possible for the manufacture of valuable chemical products. Our Government has thus done well to begin not only with the construction of a research centre, but also with the construction of the first atomic power station with a capacity of 70 megawatts. In this connection too we have received generous and valuable help from the Soviet Union.

This help will enable us to make up a good deal of our lost time, and this will mean that in the next Five Year Plan period (1961—1965) we shall be able to provide a certain proportion of our power needs by uranium fission.

However, a successful increase in the use of atomic energy in the following period will only become possible if we create our own atomic industry, and when we can press ahead with our own creative research.

Our first research reactor will enable us, among other things, to produce radioactive isotopes, which have become essential in modern research and technology. We shall also be able to work in the physical, chemical and biological fields, and do research in the field of radiation protection. All these problems form part of the field of the peaceful use of atomic energy, and we shall discuss freely and openly on our research and on our results with our colleagues in other countries, particularly our colleagues in the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. The German Democratic Republic is a full member of the United Institute for Atomic Research in Moscow, where there is a lively exchange of experiences with the leading authorities in this field.

Just at this hopeful period however, we receive the alarming news that atomic munitions are being stored on the territory of the West German Federal Republic: atomic weapons which can be transported and dropped by plane. I do not think that it is necessary for me to describe to you here the dreadful effects of the nuclear weapons of mass destruction...

I should only like to stress that it would be mistaken to comfort ourselves with the idea that these are only so-called "tactical weapons", that is to say small shells of a lower degree of effectiveness. An explosive body activated by nuclear fission must have a minimum weight of between 10 and 20 kilogrammes, the so called "critical size": otherwise it cannot explode. This means that the smallest atomic weapon must have the same explosive power as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima on August 6th 1945. We scientists, like all Germans in both East and West, must regard the stationing of atomic munitions on German soil as a direct threat to the existence of our people...

As an atomic scientist I can give the assurance that our work on atomic problems in the German Democratic Republic is devoted solely and exclusively to peaceful purposes.

(From a speech delivered to the National Council of the National Front)

Atom Scientist Makes a Radio You Can Swallow

East German scientists have developed a radio transmitter so small that it can be swallowed. The pill-like radio station then transmits information on pressure, acidity and so on during its passage through the stomach, duodenum, and intestine.

The radio, less than one inch long and less than half an inch in diameter, has been developed by Professor Manfred von Ardenne, atom expert and television pioneer, in cooperation with Professor Sprung, noted Dresden surgeon. It consists of a plastic case with contains a minute short-wave transmitter.

Full details of the new medical instrument will be announced as soon as thorough tests have been made of its use. American scientists have also recently developed a similar instrument, but this has also not yet been tested out in use.

Labour "Shadow Minister" in E. Berlin

Germany is Most Urgent Problem, Says Robens

Europe, particulary the continued division of Germany, was characterised as the most urgent question facing the Great Powers and as "possibly one of the greatest dangers to peace", by Labour M. P. Alfred Robens in East Berlin. In his opinion "the solution of the German and European problem is the key to the rest".

Mr. Robens, Labour Party foreign affairs expert and Minister of Labour in the shadow cabinet, was speaking during a discussion in East Berlin's Humboldt University on April 10 organised by the German Democratic Republic's United Nations' Association. Earlier in the day Mr. Robens, also Vice-President of Britain's United Nations' Association, had had talks with Sepp Schwab, Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic.

Time and again Mr. Robens stressed the necessity of the Great Powers coming to some agreement step by step. Only when the Great Powers could agree among themselves, "shall we see the success of any disarmament conferences held under UN auspices ... or have control over the hydrogen bomb and finally achieve its elimination," he remarked.

In Asia, in the Middle East, in Europe, indeed in all corners of the world there was disagreement among the Big Powers, all involving great problems. But, he added, "I see Europe as the most difficult problem and the continued division of Germany is possibly one of the greatest dangers to peace."

If the German problem could be solved, if the division of the country could be ended, "if it can be accomplished by agreement between the German people themselves and the Great Powers, then I believe that settlement would begin to create confidence where now only suspicion lies ... This would make settlement of all other world problems much easier."

Throughout the evening Mr. Robens adhered to his view that, for the solution of the German problem, agreement between the Great Powers was a first essential, after which the German people should endeavour to come to agreement. Otherwise, he maintained, it would be "putting the cart before the horse."

In considering ways of solving the problem, Mr. Robens urged that inacceptable proposals should not be formulated; they must be proposals also acceptable to the German people as a whole. What must be said at the very outset was that "a reunified Germany should willing agree not to be a member of N. A. T. O. or the Warsaw Pact (of East European States). A united Germany must not be a menace to her neighbours or left entirely free about the heights to which she would carry her own armaments," he stated.

Mr. Robens supported a variation of a plan recently propounded in West Berlin by the Leader of the Opposition Mr. Hugh Gaitskell for a zone of limited armaments in Europe guaranteed by the Four Great Powers.

A possible solution would be a security arrangement to include a reunified Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia, guaranteed by the Big Powers. In that area "we should try for the first time in the world an experiment on limitation of arms; there should be no atomic weapons for instance. Arms should be limited in size and quality and be subject to international control and inspection in which defensive arrangements such as radar screens could be devised."

Speaking in favour of East-West trade on economic and political grounds M. Robens told his audience "if you can get trade barriers down and goods are being freely exchanged, you are making an important contribution to understanding and maintaining peace."

All speakers in the subsequent discussion were at one that the Great Powers must agree but that in settlement of the German problem the German people themselves must have a say. Heinz Willmann, Secretary of the German Democratic Republic Peace Council put it thus: "We should all welcome it if the Big Powers were to sit down and discuss how to solve the German problem, but the German people have something to say about it."

State Secretary Dr. Wilhelm Girnus (deputy leader of the German Democratic Republic Observer Delegation to the Geneva 1955 Foreign Ministers Conference) recalled that one of the recommendations of that Conference was that the German problem must be solved in conformity with the German people's national interests. He underlined that from bitter experience the German people had learned that militarism was the mortal enemy of democracy within their country.

Professor Heinz Kamnitzer underlined that if, for a start, the two German states — as proposed by East Germany — could agree on limitation of their armed forces, this would be an important contribution to securing peace. The task was to incorporate the two German states into some sort of security system now, Professor Kamnitzer argued.

The discussion lasted for over four hours and at the end Professor Steiniger, President of the German Democratic Republic United Nations Association, in thanking Mr. Robens made the point that the exchange of views had demonstrated once again how much all those concerned with preserving peace had in common.

Democratic Germany Wants More Trade with Britain

Democratic Germany would welcome a big expansion of trade with Britain, it was officially stated in Berlin on April 15th. The official statement commented on a remark made recently in the House of Commons by Sir David Eccles, President of the Board of Trade. Sir David Eccles rejected the idea of normal trade relations between the two countries, giving as his reason the fact that there were no diplomatic relations.

The East Berlin official statement commented: "The German Democratic Republic has concluded trade agreements with all states in Europe, with the exception of Spain, Ireland and Italy, despite the lack of diplomatic relations. The German Democratic Republic is in a position to increase trade with Britain very considerably, although the lack of a trade agreement makes trade considerably more difficult. The participation of 83 British firms in the Leipzig Spring Fair shows that broad industrial circles in Britain are interested in trading with the German Democratic Republic."

Kolonialismus

Democratic Germany Condemns West German Drive for Colonies

The Government of the German Democratic Republic has officially condemned West German „neo-colonialism", and has repeated its offer of aid for the new national states and those peoples struggling for independence.

On April 10th the Foreign Ministry of the German Democratic Republic issued the following statement on the subject:

In recent times it has become ever clearer that the government of the German Federal Republic is aiding Britain, France, Belgium and Holland in the exploitation of their colonies and the suppression of the liberation movements in their colonies, and that it is itself acting like a colonial power.

This attitude on the part of the Federal Republic received its clearest form in the signature in Rome by the six Montan Union states of the treaty creating the "Common Market", and the integration in this treaty area of the so-called "overseas territories". This treaty gives the members of the Common Market, including the Federal Republic, wide opportunities of exploiting these colonial areas.

The government of the German Federal Republic has undertaken to make available the sum of 200 million dollars in the next five years for the colonial administrations of these territories. The major part of the investments to be contributed to this fund by all treaty partners is earmarked for the French colonies, including Algeria under the terms of the Common Market treaty. Only a few days ago a large delegation of West German "economic experts" visited the French colonies in Central Africa in order to investigate the chances for West German participation in the colonial exploitation.

West German monopolies are making great efforts to penetrate other under-developed countries. They are endeavouring to secure a considerable share of the oil reserves in various Middle Eastern countries.

All these measures are naturally camouflaged with countless statements about the alleged anti-colonialist attitude of the Federal Republic, and about a "readiness to extend unselfish help to under-developed countries". In reality, however, there is open support for the colonial powers, particularly France, in the maintenance of colonial domination, and the aim is the penetration of West German imperialism in these areas in the form of new colonial power.

It is understandable that the peoples of Africa and Asia should regard these efforts on the part of the ruling circles in West Germany as being directed against their efforts to attain national independence. The neo-colonial efforts of West Germany were clearly shown in the support given to the British-French-Israeli aggression against the Egyptian people, and in West German support for the Eisenhower doctrine. It is well known that this doctrine aims at the economic and military subjugation of African and Asian countries.

The alliance between the West German government and the imperialist interests of other powers was shown by the fact that Herr Erhard, Minister of Economics of the Federal Republic, refused to attend the opening of the West German industrial exhibition in Cairo, although he had promised to attend. The reason given was that one should not annoy Britain and France, who had proved so clearly their hostile attitude towards the right to self-determination and independence by their aggression against Egypt.

The cooperation of the West German government with the old colonial powers is also shown by the fact that they approved the inclusion of the Indonesian province of West Irian (West New Guinea) in the "Common Market", and thus demonstrated that they regard West Irian as a Dutch colony.

On the question of the return to the Republic of India of the Portugese colony of Goa, the West German government maintains its stand on the side of the Portugese colonialists, despite its repeated statements about its friendly feelings towards India.

On the question of the legal situation of Kashmir as a part of the Indian Union, the West German government has not taken up a clear position.

With the support of the West German government, German citizens take part in the suppression of the liberation movement in Algeria, as members of the French Foreign Legion. With the same aim in view, the West German War Minister Strauss recently had talks with the French War Minister on the possibility of stationing West German NATO troops in North Africa, in the course of an "inspection trip" through Algeria and the Sahara.

All these facts contradict the claims made by the West German government, and reveal this government as an active supporter of colonialism and as an enemy of the popular national liberation movements.

The Foreign Ministry of the German Democratic Republic states

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clearly that the government of the German Democratic Republic condemns most sharply the expansionist aims of the government of the German Federal Republic. The government of the German Democratic Republic welcomes the liberation movement of the peoples of Africa and Asia, extends them its full sympathies, and pledges them its support. The German Democratic Republic represents those forces in Germany which wish to have nothing to do with the colonialist efforts of German imperialism; these forces comprise the major part of the German people.

The policy of colonial expansion of the Government of the Federal Republic is aimed not only against the peoples of Africa and Asia, but also against the German people themselves. The Government of the German Democratic Republic is convinced that the governments and peoples of the countries of Africa and Asia will know how to distinguish between the measures and plans of the West German government, and the wishes of the German people.

The German Democratic Republic is ready to establish friendly relations with all national independent states and with all peoples struggling for their independence, and to give them every possible help, without political conditions, in the development of their economy on the basis of full equal rights.

SPECIAL BONUSES FOR MINERS

A special bonus system for coal miners will soon be introduced in Democratic Germany to help overcome the bottleneck in fuel supplies, it was announced in Berlin on March 29th. The new bonus system, details of which will be published later, is one of the steps made necessary by the very strained coal situation, mainly due to reduced coal supplies from Poland in recent months. Other measures envisaged with the same aim include differentiated prices for electricity; a strict system of priorities for the industrial use of coal and power; and a campaign for factories to store during the summer the coal supplies they need for the coming winter.

In addition long-term schemes are going into operation to increase very greatly the East German production of soft coal. An entirely new soft-coal field will be brought into production in the next few years which will help to raise soft coal production from the present figure of over 200 million tons, already highest in the world, to a new peak of 260 million tons by 1960.

Announcing the new "battle for coal", Deputy Prime Minister Fred Oelssner stated: "This programme is the most important economic task of the next few years: we must fulfil the programme at all costs."

Broader Bonn Bans

West German police raided offices of the Democratic Women's Federation in all parts of the Federal Republic on April 10th, seizing all files and sealing the rooms. The homes of a number of leading members of the organisation were also searched by the police, but no arrests were reported. On the same date it was officially announced in Bonn that the Democratic Women's Federation had been banned on the grounds that its activities were "directed against the constibutional order of the Federal Republic".

The "All-German Study Circle for Agriculture and Forestry" was banned simultaneously, the same reason being given.

One day earlier the Bonn authorities had banned the Communist Party of the Saar. At the time of the ban on the West German Communist Party in 1956, the Saar did not form part of the West German state, and the Communist Party of the Saar was therefore not included in the original ban.

New Pen President

Arnold Zweig, noted German author, has been elected President of the German PEN Centre East and West, in succession to dramatist Bertolt Brecht, who died on August 14th 1956.

The German PEN Centre East and West is made up of leading writers from both halves of Germany, and exists parallel to another PEN Centre consisting only of West German writers.

Economic Commission Established

A central Economic Commission, consisting of those members of the cabinett of the German Democratic Republic most closely connected with economic problems, was formed in Berlin on April 11th.

The chairman of the six-man commission, Deputy Prime Minister Bruno Leuschner, explained that the new body would have the task of day-to-day coordination in the economic field. The commission would be empowered to make quick decisions when necessary on important matters in the field of industry and trade. He warned however that nobody should expect the commission to perform miracles. The establishment of the economic commission was only one of a chain of measures now being undertaken to improve the functioning of socialist democracy in all fields.

Religion in Figures

Official statistics on membership in religious denominations in the German Democratic Republic show that the overwhelming majority of the population register themselves as Evangelical Christians.

The figures, based on a survey made in August 1950, which did not include East Berlin, are as follows:

Evangelical Church	13,980,000
Roman Catholics	1,900,092
Apostolic & New Apostolic Church	69,015
Methodists & Baptists	27,455
Other Christian Sects	22,301
Jews	1,334
Other Religions	1,656
No Religion	1,170,358

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Many visitors who come to Berlin from abroad make a point of climbing up the three flights of narrows stairs to call on us here in our little office on the Friedrich Strasse, one of the main streets in East Berlin, and we are always very glad to see them — except perhaps on the rather frantic day when we are just "putting the paper to bed".

Our visitors, who come from all parts of the world, tell us what they like, or don't like, about the paper, their impressions of East Berlin or the Democratic Republic, and generally flood us with questions, some of which are not so easy to answer offhand.

One of the most frequent questions today is: "Why does the central part of Berlin look such a mess?" And I am afraid that the question is rather justified: large parts of central Berlin do look a mess. The Friedrich Strasse, for instance, has an extremely unfinished look about it. A few years ago it looked like rather like a moon landscape, with burned-out buildings and piles of rubble on both sides. Now nearly all the ruins have been cleared away, but this has not really improved the view much: today long stretches of this important artery look rather like a rather bad mouth of teeth, with occasional isolated buildings still standing and then long stretches of cleared ground in between.

Why has not the work of reconstruction gone ahead here as fast as in other parts of the city? Spurred by several queries recently, I have been making a few enquiries, and I find there are several reasons. For one thing, the Friedrich Strasse is a relatively short stretch of street running from part of the West Sector of Berlin in the north through the Democratic Sector, and out into another part of the West Sector in the south. Under any normal state of affairs, the town planners from East and West would have got together and coordinated their plans so that this West-East-West street would form a unified whole in the city plan of the unified Berlin which is bound to come some time.

Unfortunately, however, the state of affairs in Berlin is not normal, and there has been little or no official contact between the two parts of Berlin in the field of town planning.

As second reason for the unsatisfactory state of affairs in the Friedrich Strasse is that it is planned to widen the street very considerably; at present it is much too narrow for modern traffic conditions. This widening will entail moving back the building line on the east side of the street by some twenty or thirty yards: this in its turn will entail tearing down a fair number of buildings still standing on the eastern side: and in the present tight state of accomodation in Berlin as a result of the bomb damage it is very hard to make up your mind to tear down perfectly good buildings.

Incidentally, West Berlin refusal to cooperate with East Berlin on town planning has produced a grotesque result on just this point: just inside the West Sector a completely new and very glossy building has newly been completed — on the eastern side of the street, where it will inevitably have to be torn down again in a few years time if the street widening programme is to make any sense. Perhaps significantly, this glossy chromium-plated new building is an unemployment exchange.

So the job of rebuilding the Friedrich Strasse is faced with all sorts of problems. In the meantime, however, I am glad to see that the East Berlin authorities are making big efforts to make it look more attractive, even in its present gapped-toothed and provisional state. In the past few weeks big bowls, filled with growing daffodils and pansies have been sited along the street, and they make a brave show in the fine spring weather we have been having. In addition, flower gardens and lawns are being laid out on some of the bombed sites, and they will do a lot to fill the gaps.

I never thought, by the way, that I should regret seeing ruins being torn down, but I am afraid that I am selfishly regretting it now. I live in central Berlin in a little enclave which was almost entirely surrounded by huge heaps of ruins and the burned-out skeletons of buildings. Once I got used to the ruins — and you get used to them very quickly — I found that they insulated the house very effectively from the noises inevitable in the centre of a city. Now the ruins are being cleared away, and I am surrounded at home by a bare and dusty bomb-site, instead of the weed and shrub-grown mountains of rubble. But I hope that nobody interprets this paragraph as being in favour of mass-bombing as a method of ensuring quiet in the home. It never was really as quiet as all that anyway — the young lady upstairs plays the piano very loudly and not very well.

But to get away from the ruins, and back to our visitors. One of their more frequent questions in the past was "Why are the buildings here plastered with slogans?" I am glad to say that the question — and the slogans — have become more infrequent recently. There has been a lot of criticism in the press here for quite a while now of the overabundance of slogans, which shouted "Hurrah for this" and "Down with That", without any very apparent purpose or effect.

Sometimes, of course, if used with discretion, this method can be very effective. I recall a hoarding outside a school here a few years ago, which said quite simply that of the 300 children then attending the school, 40 had lost both parents in the war and 80 more had lost one parent, and ended with a simple appeal to oppose any drive to a new war. That was simple and telling. But unfortunately the same cannot be said of many of the other posters and placards which have often been empty exhortations which in the end nobody even noticed — with the exception of vistors from elsewhere.

Sometimes they were not just empty phrases, but were absolutely ludicrous. The most famous and most-often quoted example of such a placard was that placed near a large forest somewhere in the Republic. It stated simply: "We Pledge Ourselves to Reduce Forest Fires by 50 %".

But it does not only happen here. I am grateful to the "Manchester Guardian" for a note on such a happening. The "Manchester Guardian" reported:

"We read of a demonstration lately put on by the African National Congress in Uganda. Banners were carried inscribed with slogans, among them 'We are fed up with the British Government'. But it proved impossible to get the whole slogan on to one banner in large enough letters, so it was split. The first banner read 'We are fed'; the second 'Up with the British Government'."

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